

1770

1918

HISTORY

OF

TROUT HALL

HOME OF THE LEHIGH COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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A HISTORY OF TROUT HALL

By CHARLES R. ROBERTS

President of the Lehigh County Historical Society

As an introduction to this historical sketch of the building known as Trout Hall, it seems altogether proper to give a short account of the early history and founding of the city of Allentown.

The first mention of the Lehigh region is found in a letter written April 12, 1701, by William Penn, to a trader referring to his dealings with the Indians. Between 1720 and 1730 there were few settlers in this region, but after 1730 they became more numerous. In 1735, William Allen, then Mayor of Philadelphia, became the owner of a tract of 5,000 acres of land on the west bank of the Lehigh River, or the west branch of the Delaware, as it was frequently called. About 1740, Mr. Allen built a log house on this tract, near the bank of the Jordan Creek, which was used by himself and friends as a hunting and fishing lodge.

This was the first house built on this tract and on the draft of the road from Easton to Reading, laid out in 1753, in which Union Street was a link, its location is marked, "Mr. Allen's house." In 1750, Mr. Allen became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Province and in 1762, by his direction, a town was laid out on his land covering forty-two blocks and called Northampton. The new town was commonly called Mr. Allen's town, and then Allenstown and finally, in 1838, the name was officially changed to Allentown. The limits of the town were, Fourth, Tenth, Union and Liberty Streets. In 1763, sixteen men were taxed as residents of the new town: Leonard Abel, Simon Brenner, Martin Derr, David Deshler, Martin Froelich, Simon Lyendecker, George Lauer, Jacob Moor, Peter Miller, Daniel Numemaker, Abraham Rinker, Peter Rhoads, Peter Schwab, George Schnepf, Nicholas Schneck and George Wolf.

Colonel James Burd purchased several lots on the north side of Hamilton Street, between Hall and Eighth, and had a house built on the property. In a letter written by him from Lancaster, dated June 28, 1762, to Mr. Allen, he said:

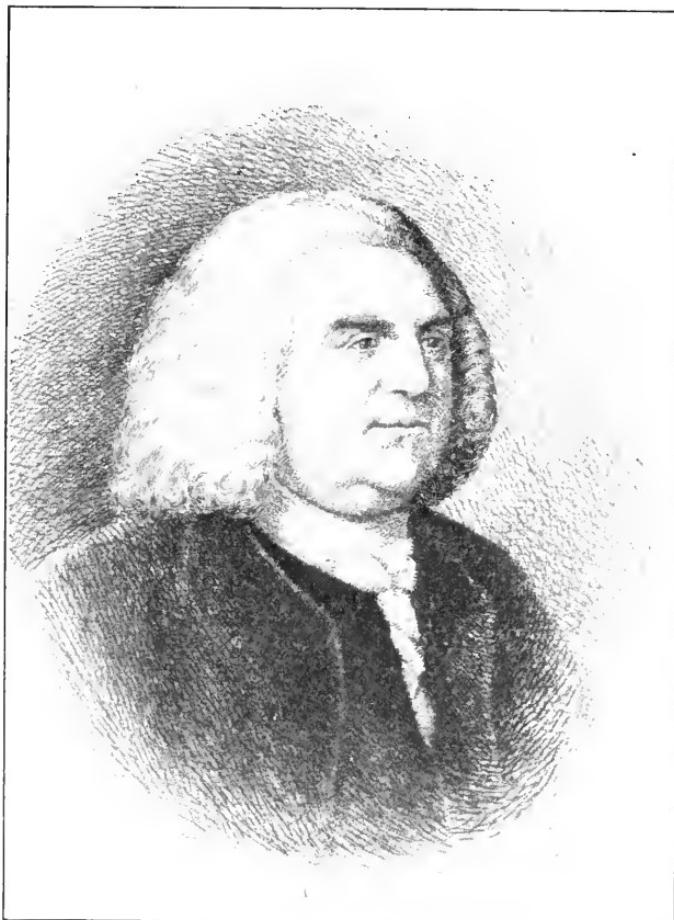
"I had a letter the other day from Mr. Klotz, and he informs me that my house goes very well and that there is ten houses more building in Northampton."

Mr. Allen wished to secure Colonel Burd to manage the town and his other land. In a letter to Colonel Burd, his father in-law, Edward Shippen, wrote: "Cousin Allen is to hold a court of Oyer and Terminor here next week and hopes to see you to talk with you about his new town. He says several people have applied to him to take his plantation at Northampton, but that he would not let anybody have it till he gave you the refusal of it. The man who lived last upon it, he says, gained a good estate by it. He wants you, he tells me, for a manager of his Town, etc., but these things I leave to your own Judgement."

In 1763, Mr. Allen and his two daughters went to England, where they arrived at Portsmouth on June 12th, after "an agreeable passage of six weeks." In the fall of this year, events occurred which changed the plans of Colonel Burd and greatly affected the little village. On the 8th of October a band of Indians descended upon Allen and Whitehall Townships, only six miles distant from Allentown, and killed fifteen persons. In a few hours the town was crowded with refugees, and although it was Saturday, Rev. Jacob Joseph Roth, a Lutheran minister, was conducting a service in the log church at Hamilton and Church Streets, and was compelled to stop the service and assist Colonel Burd, who had arrived in the town, to form a company to protect the town. George Wolf was chosen Captain, and Abraham Rinker, Lieutenant, of a company of twenty-five men organized.

Colonel Burd wrote from Fort Augusta to Mr. Allen, on January 10, 1764, as follows: "On the Saturday morning the town of Northampton was crowded with men, women and children flying from the Indians, whom they said was within a few miles of the town, killing all before them and burning the houses." Again: "I expected ere now to have been pleasantly situated at Northampton with my family, but the alteration of our affairs in America by the new Indian war, has obliged me to think of settling in the interior parts of the Province." To a Mr. Stewart, he wrote: "This new Indian war has altered the situation of my affairs greatly. I thought to have been very pleasantly situated at Northampton with my family and have rendered some small marks of my gratitude to one of my best friends. I think it would be best if agreeable to Mr. Allen and you that Mr. Gordon should give directions about the management of the town to the best man he can find upon the spot. I mean, to prevent abuses on the Plantation, in cutting down the Timber, as it is out of my power in my present circumstances to do my worthy friend that Service. The Plantation might be rented for a year until Mr.

Allen should return from England if you thought proper, but the house should have a new Roof immediately, otherwise it will all rot."



Will. Allen

To Mr. Allen he wrote: "The town was increasing but I suppose now it is quite at a stand. They had not got water in the Well, but I gave orders to go on with it."

On January 5, 1767, Chief Justice William Allen deeded to his son, James Allen, the town and all his land adjoining, amounting

to 3,338 acres. James Allen was born in Philadelphia in 1742. He entered the College of Philadelphia in 1755, graduated in 1759, studied law with Shippen, the Provincial Councilor, and in July, 1761, went to London, England, to complete his law studies at the Temple, where he remained until 1765. He was admitted to practice in the Supreme Court, September 26, 1765; was elected a common councilman of Philadelphia on October 6, 1767, and on May 15, 1776, was elected to the Assembly, receiving 853 votes, with only 14 against him.

Jasper Yeates, of Lancaster, wrote to James Burd, February 28, 1768: "Our friend, Jimmy Allen, is to be married to Miss Betsy Lawrence in a day or two, as we are credibly informed."

Edward Burd wrote to his father, James Burd, March 5, 1768: "Old Mrs. Lawrence, the mother of Mr. John Lawrence, died last Sunday, which accident I suppose will retard the marriage of her granddaughter for some time."

James Allen married, March 10, 1768, in Christ Church, Philadelphia, Elizabeth, only child of John Lawrence, Esq., and his wife, Elizabeth Francis, daughter of Tench Francis, Esq. They had four children: Anne Penn Allen, who married James Greenleaf; Margaret Elizabeth Allen, who married William Tilghman, afterward Chief Justice; Mary Masters Allen, who married Henry W. Livingston, and James, who died in 1788, in his tenth year.

In 1770, James Allen built Trout Hall. He wrote in his diary, on November 6, 1770: "Two days ago I returned from Trout Hall (a name I have just given my house) where I had been with Mr. Lawrence, my brother Billy and Jenny Tilghman. We were at Heller's near the Gap of ye mountain, but to our surprise did not kill one Grouse. This refers to the Wind Gap. On September 13, 1771, he wrote: "This day I set off for Trout Hall with my wife and child and Mrs. Lawrence. They have not been there since I finished my house."

The name, Trout Hall, was given for the reason that all the streams in the vicinity, the Jordan, Little Lehigh and Cedar Creeks and the Lehigh River, abounded in the gamy trout. Augusta Moore, the poetess, must have known of the beauty of the Lehigh when she wrote:

"For Lehigh was our joy and pride,
Our glad, beloved river;
And all around was charmed ground,
Our Home! delightful ever."

On October 14, 1775, Mr. Allen wrote in his diary: "Last Thursday and the preceding Tuesday I appeared in Battalion in my uniform, as a private man in Captn. Shees company." On

June 16, 1776: "This day I set off with my family for Northampton, with the Chariot, Phaeton and Sulky." In September, 1776, Mr. Allen visited New York and was received by General Washington at his headquarters, "with the utmost politeness," where he found many friends. June 6, 1777, he writes: "I am now fixed here, and am very busy in gardening, planting, etc. I



visit Phila. once in 2 months." October 1, 1777, he wrote: "Mr. Hamilton is now at my house: he arrived here the 17th of last month and is very happy that he is so well situated. Since the battle of Brandywine many thousand Waggons passed my door and are continually passing in great numbers. All the baggage of our Army is at Bethlehem and here: and what with Hos-

pitals and artificers these little towns are filled. Every day some of the inhabitants of Philadelphia are coming up to settle here. The road from Easton to Reading, by my house, is now the most travelled in America. Many of the Congress passed by this place."

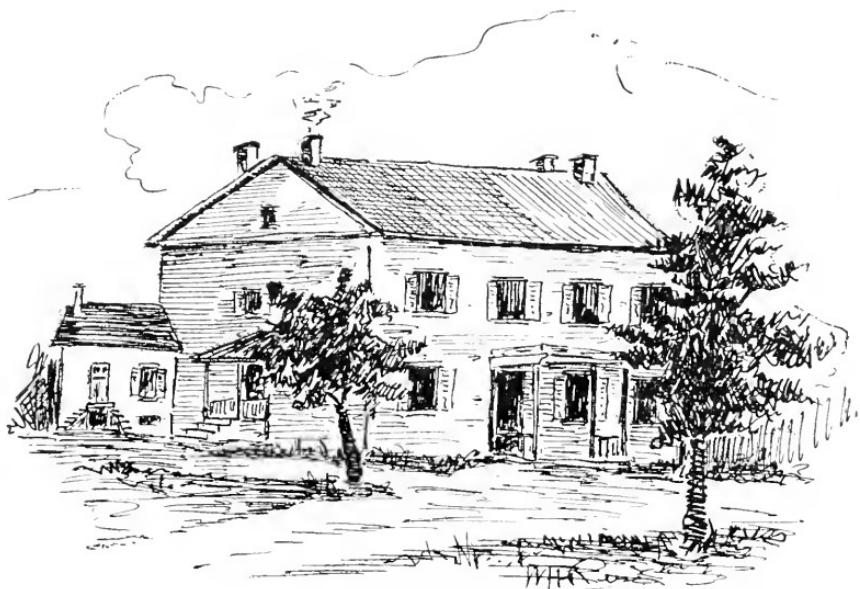
November 21, 1777: "Mr. John Adams, who passed thru here a week ago, said the struggle was past and that Independence was now unalterably settled; the Crisis was over, The great magazines of military stores here, at Bethlehem and Easton are removed to Carlisle. . . . The General Hospital is still here and the Director General, Dr. Shippen, and his assistant, Dr. Bond, my old acquaintance, with my wife's cousin, T. Lawrence, make out a good Society, and we endeavor to banish Polities."

On December 26, 1777, Mr. Allen rode to Valley Forge, and dined at headquarters with General Washington. Here he secured a pass permitting his wife and three daughters, her mother, Mrs. Lawrence, and their housekeeper, Mrs. Du Berry, and her daughter, to enter Philadelphia. Mr. Allen accompanied them on January 7th and returned to Trout Hall. He remained here until February, when he visited his sister, Mrs. John Penn, at Union, N. J., and on the 13th went with her to Philadelphia, where his son, James, was born on February 24th.

He never returned to Trout Hall, although he wrote in his diary that he should prefer his old situation at Trout Hall, with security for his person and property. His health came upon him and on May 11, 1778, he wrote: "My health is much injured by a shortness of breath and pain in the breast. I am in hopes I shall get rid of it, but as the difficult breathing has continued for a year and a half, it alarms me. I have decreased in weight 44 lbs., my spirits hurt and a general relaxation." The last entry in his diary was July 15, 1778. His health became worse and he proposed going to France in the autumn. His death occurred on September 19, 1778. In his will he bequeathed to his wife all his furniture, plate, horses, carriages, books and stocks, and the house and lot on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. The estate at Northampton was given to his children. His sword he left to his brother, Andrew, and his watch to his brother, William. He also freed his three negro slaves. His widow subsequently married Hon. John Lawrence, a United States Senator from New York, and had three children: Emily, married Joseph Fowler; Frances, married Alexander McWhorter; and Margaret, married George H. McWhorter.

After the Revolution, Mrs. Allen, after her second marriage, Mrs. Lawrence, and her daughters, spent considerable time here,

especially in the summer. I have been told that the three sons of my great-great-grandfather, Judge Peter Rhoads, who were of the same ages as the Allen girls, frequently took them fishing. James, the young son of James Allen, died in his tenth year, in 1788, and his sisters then becoming the sole owners, made partition of the town of Northampton on May 17, 1798. On January 31, 1825, William Tilghman and Anne Penn Greenleaf, conveyed to Mary, wife of Walter Livingston, several blocks of ground, among which was the block in which Trout Hall was situated. Mrs. Livingston was Mrs. Greenleaf's daughter and married her cousin, Walter C. Livingston, on July 12, 1824. Mr. Livingston was a merchant and his Philadelphia residence was at Eleventh Street and Girard Avenue. On August 3, 1828, he was commissioned by Governor Schulze, Colonel of the 68th Regiment of Militia, in the Second Brigade, Seventh Division, composed of Northampton, Pike and Lehigh Counties. On June 22, 1830, he



TROUT HALL IN 1850

was commissioned by Governor Wolf, as Aide-de-Camp, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. These commissions were presented to this society by Mrs. C. W. MacFarlane, of Philadelphia. In October, 1831, Mr. Livingston was elected to the State Senate from Lehigh County.

He later became United States Consul at Marseilles, France, and there repeated the brilliant entertainments with which he

had dazzled Philadelphia society. After the family returned to this country he became heavily interested in some iron furnaces near Media, which proved unsuccessful and the greater part of his property was swept away. In 1847, Trout Hall, described as a two-story stone messuage and sixteen acres of land, was sold to Comegys' Paul, of Philadelphia, who, a week later, sold it to Christian Pretz and Henry Weimsheimer. The house was occupied for a time by Erskine Hazzard and by Matthew Selfridge.

On May 1, 1848, the Allentown Seminary was opened in the Livingston mansion, as it had become to be called during the Livingston ownership, by Rev. Christian Rudolph Kessler, who taught the Classics and German. J. B. Evans was teacher of English and Mathematics and C. L. Lochman of Drawing.

At the end of the third term, on September 29, 1849, a catalogue was printed, a copy of which is owned by this society, presented by the late Philip S. Pretz.

There were 32 pupils, who were as follows: C. A. Boas, son of Captain J. D. Boas, of Allentown; W. S. Briggs, Lehighton; B. K. Brobst, Lynn Township; B. F. Derr, son of William Derr, of Allentown; J. H. E. Dubs, who became a minister and historian of the Reformed Church, son of Rev. Joseph S. Dubs, of North Whitehall; T. C. Freytag, son of Daniel C. Freytag, who then owned what was later the Elliger home on Chew Street; Jacob B. Geib, of Philadelphia; Phaon P. Haas, of Lynn; H. C. Hardtner, of Baltimore; T. J. Heberling, of Weissport; B. F. Held, son of John Held, of South Whitehall; Thomas Keck, son of Solomon L. Keck, of Hanover; Simon P. Kern, son of Edward Kern, of North Whitehall; J. Reed and C. Eugene Meyer, sons of Conrad Meyer, the organ builder, of Philadelphia; F. J. Mohr, son of Jacob Mohr; P. S. Pretz, son of Christian Pretz; and Lewis Ritter, son of Jacob Ritter, all of Allentown; J. M. Rommel, Philadelphia; Q. A. Roth, son of Daniel Roth, and Henry W. Rupp, son of Tilghman Rupp, of Allentown; Alfred G. Saeger, son of William Saeger, of Hanover; S. S. Schultz, of Berks County; R. H. Seiler, of Harrisburg; H. D. Spinner, of Allentown; C. H. and F. A. Von Tagen, of Germantown; William Weigel, son of David Weigel, and Henry A. Wilson, son of John Wilson, of Allentown; Franklin Yeager, of Lower Macungie; Theodore C. Yeager (Mayor of Allentown in 1873), son of Rev. Joshua Yeager, and Edward B. Young (elected Mayor of Allentown in 1876), son of Joseph Young, both of Allentown.

There were two sessions of five months each, beginning November 1st and May 1st. The vacation months were April and October. Tuition was \$15 per session. Tuition, board and wash-

ing, \$65. Fuel for winter was fifty cents. In 1850, new scholars were: Oscar Behne, Reading; I. H. Zuilch, Lynn; John I. Detweiler, Hellertown; Hiram H. Schwartz, North Whitehall, who subsequently became a Judge of the Berks County courts; John F. Knemerle, of Philadelphia; Edwin Solliday, Lynn; Jacob F. Brown, Pottsville; Thomas Weber, Upper Saucon; Thomas J. Gross, Salisbury; Owen A. and Aaron Miller, Saegersville; Theodore H. Seyfert, Philadelphia; Edward H. M. Sell, Upper Saucon; and Franklin J. F. and L. R. A. Schantz, Henry A. Blumer, Edwin German, T. A. Mohr, Lewis H. Wolf, Edward F. Powell, Henry H. Lightcap and A. C. Pretz, of Allentown.

In the summer of 1851, a west wing was erected and occupied by three departments. In the summer of 1854 the central building of four stories was erected and the Livingston mansion raised to three stories. This gave the seminary a front of 130 feet. There were then 202 pupils and accommodations for 100 boarders. Rev. William N. Reynolds, D. D., was Principal from 1855 to September, 1857, when he became President of the Illinois State University, at Springfield, Ill. Rev. William Phillips, A. M., was Principal from November 1, 1857, to November 1, 1859, when Rev. W. R. Hofford became Principal. In March, 1864, the Seminary was chartered by the Legislature as the Allentown Collegiate Institute and Military Academy.

Rev. M. L. Hofford was the only president of the institution under this charter, and resigned in the spring of 1867. The institution was closed June 16, 1867. The Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania then assumed partial control and it became Muhlenberg College.

On August 31, 1868, the title passed from Messrs. Pretz and Weinsheimer to Muhlenberg College.

A stone wall extended in front of this property, along Walnut Street, from Fifth to Jordan Streets. The first Lehigh County fair was held in 1852 in the field east of Fourth Street. A white frame building, used as a laundry, stood to the east of Trout Hall and south of this was a small brick building, in the former of which some classes were held for a time. The young boys who attended the school wore long aprons, as was the custom of that day. Among the early pupils who are living in Allentown today are Joseph B. Lewis and Jacob A. Blumer.

Such is the history of Trout Hall and we hope that it may stand as a perpetual monument to the early inhabitants of Allentown, teaching history and patriotism to the coming generations.

A facsimile of the first copy of the *Trout Hall Argus*, issued Saturday, February 9, 1856, by A. C. Pretz, editor, is here given. It is a four-page leaflet, all pen work.

TROUT-HALL ARGUS.

A.C. Troutz.

Editor.

Volume II. Saturday Morning February 1st 1856. No. 1.

Devoted chiefly to the interests of pupils of the Allentown Seminary.

TERMS.

One copy for year of paid in advance \$7.50
dueling for year if not paid in advance \$6.00
For any greater number charges will be
made accordingly.

Subscriptions received for any time,
not less than a month.

Single copies can be obtained from
the Editor for 1 cent apiece.
Advertisements to be inserted
very cheap.

A GOOD STORY.

One stormy Sunday evening in autumn,
about half past nine o'clock, when the
rain was raining cold, and the wind
was songling through the half-
blundered trees in front of his mansion
out, spoke the great pulpit orator (Rev.
Hooper Cumming) to his dame: "My

dear, we have had two services to day;
we have tried to forget the toll of it; we
have endeavored to read - we have
essayed to converse; but all of no
avail. Fatigue has overcome us both.
The waiting of the storm - the labors
of the day all invite us to repose.
Suppose we go to bed!" The house was
closed; the servants had retired; and
they did go to bed; and in five
minutes both were in dreamland.
Presently a loud knock was heard
at the door. It was a heavy knock,
but to the sleepers whom it awoke, it
seemed a visionary 'rapping'! But the
next prolonged summons could n't be
mistaken. "Get up, my dear" said Mr.
Cumming; "the servants are all in
bed and asleep, and we are close by the door."
Then up got Hooper Cumming. He
up got out in his bed;
and said to his wife, "Who can it be?
I will go and see!" And he went.

THE RESTORATION OF TROUT HALL

By REV. JEREMIAH J. SCHINDEL

The chief object of an historical society is the cultivation of an historical sense not only among its members, but in the community where it exists. Perhaps the most tangible evidence of the influence of the Lehigh County Historical Society is the accomplished restoration of Trout Hall. The society was organ-



TROUT HALL, SOUTH VIEW

ized on January 9, 1904, with the following officers: Prof. George T. Ettinger, Ph. D., President; Mr. Philip W. Flores, Vice President; Mr. Charles R. Roberts, Secretary; Leo Wise, Esq., Treasurer. Among the objects of the society as given in Article II of its constitution is the following: "The marking of such places of historical interest as may be located in the county." The year this society was organized Muhlenberg College, which had incorporated Trout Hall as the east wing of its plant at Fourth and Walnut Streets, moved to its modern plant beautifully located on Chew Street beyond Twenty-third Street, Allentown. Its former

plant became the quarters of the Allentown Preparatory School, but the Board of Trustees at once offered the old college site for sale. At once, members of the society, especially Mr. Charles R. Roberts and Rev. J. D. Schindel, D. D., tried to create sentiment in the city for the purchase of the property as a city park, with the ultimate object of the restoration of the east wing of the old college building whose antiquity had been very successfully disguised by a thick coat of plaster and the addition of a third-story built of brick. So successfully had the old stone Trout Hall been camouflaged that the casual observer was skeptical about its historicity. Public-spirited men like Mr. John F. Kramer, then chairman of Select Council; Mr. C. M. W. Keck, a neighboring resident; Hon. Robert E. Wright, President of the Allentown National Bank, and Edward H. Reninger, Esq., now a member of the executive committee of the society, exerted their influence until on March 25, 1908, Acting Mayor Charles D. Schaeffer, M. D., signed the ordinance passed by city councils for the purchase of old Muhlenberg. The consideration was forty thousand dollars, twenty-five thousand dollars of which was paid in cash to Muhlenberg College, the balance being provided for by a mortgage against the city held by the college corporation.

With the vacating of the premises by the Allentown Preparatory School, early in 1915, officers and members of the Lehigh County Historical Society, with the co-operation of Liberty Bell Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, tried to interest the city authorities in the proposition to raze the other parts of the old college buildings and restore Trout Hall. A portion of the campus had already been sold by the city to the State of Pennsylvania for an armory to be used by the National Guard; part of the grounds was also used as a city playground. On January 7, 1916, City Council made the first appropriation of nearly four thousand dollars for the restoration of Trout Hall. Additional appropriations were made later until the city had devoted about nine thousand dollars for the purpose. With its completion the city generously contracted with the society for the rental of the building at the nominal rate of one dollar a year. By arrangement with the city and the society the building is also used by Liberty Bell Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. The care of the building has been entrusted to Mr. John E. McCloskey, who resides there with his family.

With the formal opening of Trout Hall we hope there will begin a new era of activity in the collection and preservation of valuable source material daily being destroyed, though invaluable for future histories of Lehigh County.

WHEN DREAMS COME TRUE

By IRENE B. MARTIN

For many years we dreamed of "*Trout Hall Restored*"—of its use as an art museum—as a building where rare, old pieces of furniture and reliques of the olden time could be kept in safe-keeping—and now, while sitting in Allen Park under the grand old trees so *wonderfully preserved* by Allentown City Councils, we see it in all its beauty. The park, a most restful place, with the voices of children heard in a distance—for the playgrounds,



TROUT HALL, NORTH VIEW

back of a high privet hedge, is almost hidden from view—that playgrounds, the most eagerly sought out, for it has everything to make a child's happiness complete—games, swings, and, best of all, its drill grounds, used by both girls and boys; and then, in the midst of all, you see Trout Hall in all its grandeur and the Art Museum, connected by its pergola, covered with roses, what was once the stately, old court house, moved there, and again showing its marvelous colonial architecture, spoken of and admired by all visitors to Allentown.

We enter Trout Hall, to find ourselves in the realms of days gone by—the first floor, entirely occupied by the Historical Society, furnished throughout with colonial furniture—rare old pieces—walls lined with old manuscripts—and when one feels it almost impossible to find anything of more beauty, we pass up the old stairway, to enter the rooms furnished by the Liberty Bell Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. This floor is a most complete colonial apartment, and is the home of the Chapter. Again we mount the stairway, and find the janitor's quarters, also a reminder of colonial days.

After wandering about all these beauties, we are invited to view the kitchens—these rooms, in the basement, restored by Allentown City Councils, to its perfect condition, and furnished by the Historical Society and the Liberty Bell Chapter, have all the good housewife could desire—and again one wonders!

Then returning to the parlor, we find a large gathering of men and women—hundreds of them—all members of the societies that use Trout Hall as their home—and all talking at once—so—when we were told this was not all there was to be seen, we gladly, passing through the bower of roses, enter the Art Museum and gaze with wonder at its beauty—its rare old paintings, and its quaint rooms—the one-time county offices—its grand stairway, leading into the Assembly Hall—the old court room, which could, were it possible, unfold many tales of sorrow and disappointment—and then, the old bell calls to meeting—and we know—our dreams *have* come true.

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FORMAL OPENING OF TROUT HALL

May 16, 1918, 2.00 P. M.

PROGRAM

MUSIC

Prayer by REV. C. J. COOPER, D. D.

America

Remarks by CHARLES R. ROBERTS, President of the Lehigh County Historical Society

Greetings from Mrs. F. O. RITTER, Regent of Liberty Bell Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution

Address by Comptelman J. HERBERT KOHLER, representing the Mayor and City Council

MUSIC

Address by JOHN W. JORDAN, LL. D., of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

MUSIC

Inspection of Building

DEDICATION DINNER

Elk's Club, 6 P. M.

MENU

CREAM OF TOMATO SOUP, AV. CROUTONS

OLIVES RADISHES GHERKINS

ROAST VEAL, WITH FILLING

MASHED POTATOES STRING BEANS

BISQUE ICE CREAM CAKES

COFFEE

Greetings from the Bucks, Northampton, Berks, Montgomery, Lancaster, Lebanon and Carbon County Historical Societies, Moravian Historical Society and Muhlenberg College

Greetings from the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies, by CAPTAIN H. M. M. RICHARDS, President

Patriotic Songs

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